(d) whether any target has been set for completion of work of these National Highways; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No proposals for declaration of Highways into National Highways (NHs) were received from the State of Uttar Pradesh in the years 2005-06 and 2006-07.

(b) Allocation for development of NHs are made State-wise and not NH-wise. During the year 2007-08, an amount of Rs. 120 crore has been allocated for development of NHs entrusted with the State Government of Uttar Pradesh. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 45.31 crore has been spent up to October, 2007.

(c) No proposals are pending with the Government.

(d) and (e) Does not arise.

Completion of Sethusamudram Project

1139. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of his statement to the effect that the Sethusamudram Canal Project would be completed in one year in all respects and inaugurated by Prime Minister and others;

(b) if so, whether it is possible to do so, particularly when the issue is *sub-judice* before the Supreme Court and lot of controversy is going on over the entire country; and

(c) the objective approach on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Pursuant to the submissions made before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India by the Government Counsel on 14.9.2007 in respect of certain Transfer Cases and writ petitions relating to the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project, the Government has constituated a Committee consisting of eminent persons with the terms of reference to invite objections and suggestions from all concerned including the writ petitioners having interest in the subject matter and to consider all suggestions/proposals/documents after giving them a personal hearing. The report of the Committee is awaited.

Rest areas on NH-5

1140. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NHAI has decided to withdraw all plants for rest areas on NH-5 in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Road Safety Forum had demanded completion of the rest area on NH-5 at Gundugolanu;

(d) the status of the issue; and

(e) the steps proposed to review the decision of NHAI to revoke all such decisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Land has been acquired at Singavaram near Eluru on Vijayawada-Rajahmundry section of NH-5 for developing of a comprehensive rest area.

(e) Does not arise.

Setting up Nodal Department of Transport in States

†1141. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central Government has issued any guidelines to States for setting up Nodal Department for the development of transport;

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken by the State Governments on the above guidelines; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Road Transport falls under the purview of the State Governments. It is for the State Governments to take appropriate steps for development of this sector. Thus, there is no need for issuance of any guidelines for setting up Nodal Department for the development of transport.

Approval of NH Projects from States

1142. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry prepares a list of National Highway (NH) projects periodically and gets approvals from States in one go as the present practice of project-wise approvals has not helped in completing the projects;

(b) if so, by when final decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and

(c) whether this proposal is expected to ease land acquisition problems often faced by private concessionaries in highway construction work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.